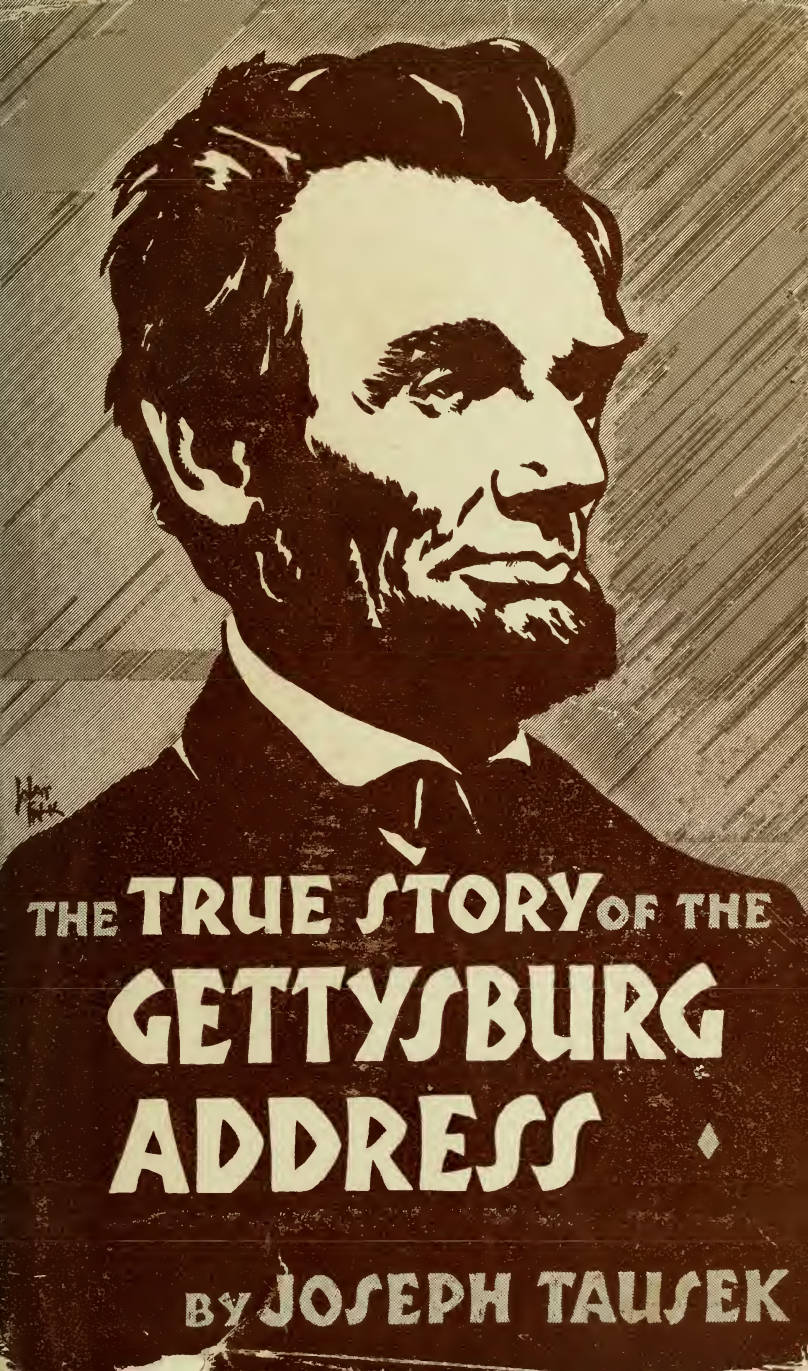
THE TRUE STORY OF THE
GETTYSBURG
ADDRESS
BY JOSEPH TAUSEK

The True Story of the Gettysburg Address

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With a Facsimile of the Address in Lincoln's Handwriting and a Portrait Jacket by Nat Falk

There has probably been more speculation about Lincoln's Gettysburg Address than any other important work in American literature. Here, finally, is what may justifiably be called the last word on the subject. The author, who for years has specialized in the study of Lincolniana, has exhaustively examined all the evidence in the case, has sifted the facts and discarded the myths and errors which have hitherto obscured the true story of this justly immortal utterance, which Horace Greeley called "the finest gem in American literature."

(*Continued on back flap*)

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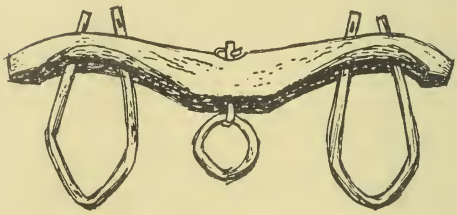

MEMORIAL

the Class of 1901

founded by
HARLAN HOYT HORNER
and
HENRIETTA CALHOUN HORNER

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The

TRUE STORY

of the

GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

The
TRUE STORY
of the
GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

By
JOSEPH TAUSEK

LINCOLN MACVEAGH
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Lincoln Room

To

THE MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER

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The

TRUE STORY

of the

GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

WHAT THEY DID THERE

AT daybreak of July 1, 1863, two armies — 170,000 men — were converging toward the little town of Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania. General Robert E. Lee was in command of the Army of Northern Virginia, numbering 78,000. The Army of the Potomac, numbering 92,000 men, was under the command of Major General George G. Meade. By ten o'clock, 370 Union and 270 Confederate cannon were pouring their rain of death over an area of fifteen square miles. For three days, the battle, the most crucial of the Civil War, was waged

with intense fury. By midnight of July 4th, Lee and his army were retreating toward the Potomac, leaving behind them 2,592 killed, 12,709 wounded and 5,150 missing. The Union losses were 3,072 killed, 14,497 wounded and 5,434 missing.

CONSECRATION

A FEW days after the battle, Andrew J. Curtain, Governor of Pennsylvania, visited the battlefield to make provision for the burial of the dead and the care of the wounded. He designated David Wills, a prominent citizen of Gettysburg, to supervise the task and to render any other appropriate service in behalf of the state. Every available building had been converted into a hospital and every woman in Gettysburg opened her home to shelter and nurse the maimed. So hastily had the process of clearing the battlefield been carried on that as

late as July 5th, dead soldiers still lay where they had fallen.

Mr. Wills early conceived the idea of establishing a national cemetery, to be consecrated and shared by the eighteen states whose sons had participated in the three days' battle. Governor Curtain concurred in the plan and authorized Mr. Wills to enter into negotiations with the governors of the other seventeen states. So earnestly did Mr. Wills pursue his humane task that by mid-August he not only had his project well formulated, but had purchased the grounds that were to be devoted to the sacred purpose. On August 17th, he wrote to Governor Curtain, in part, as follows:

"By virtue of the authority reposed in me by your Excellency, I have invited the coöperation of the several States having soldier dead on the

battlefield around this place, in the noble project of removing their remains from their present exposed and imperfectly buried condition, on the fields for miles around, to a Cemetery. . . .

"I have also, at your request, selected and purchased grounds for this cemetery, the land to be paid for by, and the title to be made to, the State of Pennsylvania, and to be held in perpetuity, devoted to the object for which purchased.

"The grounds embrace about seventeen acres on Cemetery Hill, fronting on the Baltimore Turnpike, and extending to the Taneytown road. It is the ground which formed the apex of our triangular line of battle, and the key to our line of defenses. It embraces the highest point on Cemetery Hill, and overlooks the whole battle-

field. It is the spot which should be especially consecrated to this sacred purpose. It was here that such immense quantities of our artillery were massed, and during Thursday and Friday of the battle, from this important point on the field, dealt out death and destruction to the rebel army in every direction of their advance. . . .

"I think it would be showing only proper respect for the health of this community not to commence exhuming the dead, and removal to the cemetery, until the month of November; and in the meantime the grounds should be artistically laid out, and consecrated by appropriate ceremonies."

The date set apart by the Soldiers' National Cemetery Board, of which Mr. Wills had been elected president, was originally October 23rd. Edward Everett, by common consent the fore-

most orator of the time, was unanimously selected to deliver the oration at the dedication. Mr. Everett had been a minister, a college professor, a representative in Congress for ten years, Governor of Massachusetts, Secretary of State, United States Minister to England and United States Senator. He was, therefore, the fittest choice that could have been made for the occasion.

On September 23rd, Mr. Wills addressed the following letter to Mr. Everett:

"The several States having soldiers in the Army of the Potomac, who fell at the Battle of Gettysburg in July last, gallantly fighting for the Union, have made arrangements here for the exhuming of all their dead, and their removal and decent burial in a cemetery selected for that purpose on a prominent part of the battlefield. The

design is to bury all in common, marking with headstones, with proper inscription, the known dead, and to erect a suitable monument to the memory of all these brave men, who have thus sacrificed their lives on the altar of their country. This burial-ground will be consecrated to this sacred and holy purpose on Thursday, the 23rd of October next, with appropriate ceremonies, and the several States interested have united in the selection of you to deliver the oration on that solemn occasion."

Mr. Everett promptly acknowledged the invitation and, after pleading engagements which would prevent his acceptance at any time during the month of October, added:

"The occasion is one of great importance, not to be dismissed with a few sentimental or patriotic commonplaces.

It will demand as full a narrative of the events of the three important days as the limits of the hour will admit, and some appropriate discussion of the political character of the great struggle, of which the battle of Gettysburg is one of the most momentous incidents. As it will take me two days to reach Gettysburg, and it will be highly desirable that I should have at least one day to survey the battlefield, I cannot safely name an earlier time than the 19th of November.

"Should such a postponement of the day first proposed be admissible, it will give me great pleasure to accept the invitation."

The 19th of November was accordingly agreed upon for the commemoration ceremonies. Formal invitations to attend were then sent to President Lincoln and his Cabinet, to General

Meade, to the governors of the interested states and others. President Lincoln was not, at this time, invited to speak. Some of the members of the Cemetery Board expressed doubt that he could do justice to the occasion. After some discussion, it was decided to ask the President, as head of the nation, to deliver "a few appropriate remarks" and Mr. Wills addressed the following letter to him on November 2nd:

"The several States having soldiers in the Army of the Potomac, who were killed at the battle of Gettysburg, or have since died at the various hospitals established in the vicinity, have procured grounds on a prominent part of the field for a cemetery, and are having the dead removed to them and properly buried. These grounds will be consecrated and set apart to this

sacred purpose, by appropriate ceremonies, on Thursday, the 19th instant. Hon. Edward Everett will deliver the oration. I am authorized by the governors of the different States to invite you to be present and participate in these ceremonies, which will doubtless be very imposing and solemnly impressive. It is the desire that after the oration, you, as Chief Executive of the nation, formally set apart these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks. It will be a source of great gratification to the widows and orphans that have been made almost friendless by the great battle here, to have you here personally; and it will kindle anew in the breasts of the comrades of these brave dead, who are now in the tented fields or nobly meeting the foe in the front, a confidence that they who sleep in

death on the battlefield are not forgotten by those highest in authority; and they will feel that, should their fate be the same, their remains will not be uncared for. We hope you will be able to be present to perform this last solemn act to the soldier dead on this battlefield."

Accompanying this official invitation, was a private note from Mr. Wills, asking the President to be his house guest during his stay in Gettysburg. "As the hotels in our town will be crowded and in confusion at the time referred to in the enclosed invitation," wrote Mr. Wills, "I write to invite you to stop with me. I hope you will feel it your duty to lay aside pressing business for a day to come on here to perform this last sad rite to our brave soldiers on the 19th instant. Governor Curtain and Hon. Edward Everett will

be my guests at that time, and if you come you will please join them at my house."

Although Edward Everett had been invited to speak five weeks before an invitation had been sent to the President, no suggestion was made to him that he "lay aside pressing business for a day" nor was any limitation put upon him as to the character of his speech. Indeed, so much latitude was given the distinguished orator that he was permitted to postpone the event one month. It is no disparagement of the magnificent work done by Mr. Wills to point out that President Lincoln, at that moment bearing a greater burden than any other man in the world, was given no alternative, but was asked to lay aside his responsibilities without question. When it is considered that "the proposition to ask Mr. Lincoln *to*

speak at the Gettysburg ceremonies was an afterthought," it is an interesting and characteristic commentary on the time and the event that he was treated with so much contempt and that he accepted with so much good grace. That Lincoln was solicitous to attend and "to perform this last sad rite to our brave soldiers," is made evident in his note to Stanton, in response to the latter's tentative plans for the trip to Gettysburg. "I do not like this arrangement," he wrote. "I do not wish to so go that by the slightest accident we fail entirely and, at the best, the whole to be a mere breathless running of the gantlet. But any way."

On November 18th, "We started from Washington," John Hay records in his diary, "to go to the consecration of the Soldiers' Cemetery at Gettys-

burg. On our train were the president, Seward, Usher, Blair, Nicolay and myself; Mercier and Admiral Raymond; Bertinatti and Captain Isotta, and Lieut. Martinez and C. M. Wise; W. MacVeagh; . . . " and others.

An interesting account of the trip is given by Wayne MacVeagh, whom the President asked to accompany him. "Mr. Lincoln said he wished to talk with me about some matters, and could do it more conveniently on the way to Gettysburg and back than at any other time.

"At the station, in company with Mr. Lincoln, I found Mr. Seward and several other members of the Cabinet, the French Minister, and one or two other diplomats, Mr. Nicolay, Mr. Hay, and, as I now remember, Mrs. Wise, the daughter of Mr. Everett, who was going to meet her father, who had been

several days in Gettysburg and was to deliver the oration on the occasion."

At Baltimore, a baggage car was attached to the train to serve as a diner. Shortly after leaving the station, the train entered a deep cut, submerging the guests in almost total darkness, while the noise added to the general discomfort. "Mr. Lincoln, at the head of the table," MacVeagh relates, "at once said that the situation reminded him of a friend in southern Illinois who, riding over a corduroy road where the logs were not sufficiently close together, was frightened by a thunderstorm. In the glimpses of light afforded by the lightning, his horse would endeavor to reach another log, but too frequently missed it, and fell with his rider. As a result of several such mishaps, the traveler, although not accustomed to prayer, thought that the time

had come to address his Maker, and said: 'Oh, Lord, if it would suit you equally well, it would suit me much better if I had a little more light and a little less noise.' As Mr. Lincoln concluded his story, the train passed into the open, where there was much more light and much less noise."

"At Gettysburg," Hay says, "the President went to Mr. Wills, who expected him, and our party broke like a drop of quicksilver spilt . . . We went out after a while following the music to hear the serenades. The President appeared at the door, said a dozen words meaning nothing, and went in."

In response to calls from the crowd assembled outside of the Wills house, President Lincoln said:

"I appear before you, my fellow citizens, merely to thank you for this com-

pliment. The inference is a very fair one that you would hear me for a little while at least, were I to commence to make a speech. I do not appear before you for the purpose of doing so, and for several substantial reasons. The most substantial of these is that I have no speech to make. In my position it is somewhat important that I should not say any foolish things. (A voice in the audience, 'If you can help it.') It very often happens that the only way to help it is to say nothing at all. Believing that is my present position this evening, I must beg of you to excuse me from addressing you further."

The crowd then went around the corner to serenade Secretary Seward, where it was rewarded with the following eloquent tribute to American institutions and an appeal for national conciliation:

Fellow Citizens: I am now sixty years old and upwards; I have been in public life practically forty years of that time, and yet this is the first time that ever any people, or community, so near to the border of Maryland, was found willing to listen to my voice and the reason was that I saw, forty years ago, that slavery was opening before this people a graveyard that was to be filled with brothers falling in mutual political combat. I knew that the cause that was hurrying the Union into this dreadful strife was slavery; and when, during all the intervening period, I elevated my voice, it was to warn the people to remove that cause while they could, by constitutional means, and so avert the catastrophe of civil war which has fallen upon the nation. I am thankful that you are willing to hear me at last. I thank my God that I believe this strife is going to end in the removal of that evil, which ought to have been removed by deliberate councils and peaceful means. I thank my God that this is the last fraticidal war which will fall upon the country which is vouchsafed to us by Heaven,—the richest, the broadest, the most beautiful, the

most magnificent, and capable of a great destiny, that has ever been given to any part of the human race. And I thank Him for the hope that when that cause is removed, simply by the operation of abolishing it, as the origin and agent of the treason that is without justification, and without parallel, we shall thenceforth be united, be only one country, having only one hope, one ambition and one destiny. Tomorrow, at least, we shall feel that we are not enemies, but that we are friends and brothers, that this Union is a reality, and we shall mourn together for the evil wrought by this rebellion. We are now near the graves of the misguided, whom we have consigned to their last resting place, with pity for their errors, and with the same heart full of grief with which we mourn over a brother by whose hand, raised in defense of his government, that misguided brother perished.

When we part tomorrow night, let us remember that we owe it to our country and to mankind that this war shall have for its conclusion the establishing of the principle of democratic government — the simple principle that whatever party, whatever

portion of the community, prevails by constitutional suffrage in an election, that party is to be respected and maintained in power until it shall give place, on another trial and another verdict, to a different portion of the people.

If you do not do this, you are drifting at once and irresistibly to the very verge of universal, cheerless and hopeless anarchy. But with that principle this government of ours — the purest, the best, the wisest, and the happiest in the world — must be, and, so far as we are concerned, practically will be, immortal. Fellow citizens, good-night.

An incident on the night of the 18th, which was marked by serenading and general carousing, as well as speech-making, worthy to be recorded, is the spirited outburst of Colonel John W. Forney. After hearing the President's brief response to the serenaders, Nicolay, Hay and Forney followed the throng around the corner where they heard the Secretary of State. Thence

the trio returned to Forney's room, where it was decided that a band be called and Forney serenaded and called upon for a speech. This was done. When he appeared, cheers and shouts greeted him. "My friends," he said, "these are the first hearty cheers I have heard tonight. You gave no such cheers for your President down the street. Do you know what you owe to that great man? You owe your country, you owe your great name as American citizens."

WHAT LINCOLN SAID THERE

ON the morning of the 19th, the hour for the ceremonies having arrived, the President, escorted by military and naval officers, members of the Cabinet, judges of the Supreme Court, governors and other distinguished guests, proceeded to the scene of the consecration.

In due order, Mr. Everett delivered his oration, which consumed two hours. It is unquestionably one of the finest examples of forensic eloquence in the English tongue. He traversed the pages of history, drew a fitting parallel between the obsequies held over the

Peloponnesian soldiers who had been killed in battle, when Pericles pronounced his famous oration, and the present occasion, analyzed the history and the causes of the Civil War, of which Gettysburg was the turning point, and characterized the rebellion of the Southern states as a crime against national sovereignty. The peroration of Mr. Everett's address, which is typical of the whole, follows:

And now, friends, fellow citizens of Gettysburg and Pennsylvania, and you from remoter states, let me again invoke your benediction, as we part, on these honored graves. You feel, though the occasion is mournful, that it is good to be here. You feel that it was greatly auspicious for the cause of the country, that the men of the East and the men of the West, the men of nineteen sister States, stood side by side on the perilous ridges of the battle. You now feel it a new bond of union, that they should lie side by side, till a clarion louder than

that which marshalled them to the combat, shall awake their slumbers. God bless the Union; it is dearer to us for the blood of these brave men shed in its defense. The spots on which they stood and fell; those pleasant heights, the fertile plain beneath them, the thriving village whose streets so lately rang with the strange din of war; the fields beyond the ridge, where the noble Reynolds held the advancing foe at bay, and while he gave up his own life, assured by his forethought and self-sacrifice, the triumph of the two succeeding days; the little streams which wind through the hills, on whose banks in after times, the wondering plowman will turn up, with the rude weapons of savage warfare, the fearful missiles of modern artillery; the Seminary Ridge, the Peach Orchard, Cemetery, Culp and Wolf Hill, Round Top, Little Round Top, humble names, henceforward dear and famous; no lapse of time, no distance of space shall cause you to be forgotten. "The whole earth," said Pericles, as he stood over the remains of his fellow-citizens who had fallen in the first year of the Peloponnesian war, "the whole earth is the sepul-

chre of illustrious man." All Time, he might have added, is the millennium of their glory. Surely I would do no injustice to the other noble achievements of the war, which have reflected such honor on both arms of the service, and have entitled the armies and the navy of the United States, their officers and men, to the warmest thanks and the richest rewards which a grateful people can pay. But they, I am sure, will join us in saying, as we bid farewell to the dust of these martyr-heroes, that wheresoever throughout the civilized world the accounts of this great warfare are read, and down to the latest recorded period of time, in the glorious annals of our common country, there will be no brighter page than that which relates to the Battles of Gettysburg.

At the close of Mr. Everett's oration, and after the singing of a hymn, composed for the occasion by Benjamin B. French, President Lincoln was introduced by Marshal Ward Hill Lamon. The President then delivered the brief

by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln.

November 19, 1863.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
IMORE, IN 1864.

Address delivered at the dedication of the
Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers
brought forth on this continent, a new na-
tion, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated
to the proposition that all men are creat-
ed equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war,
testing whether that nation, or any nation
so conceived and so dedicated, can long
endure. We are met on a great battle-field
of that war. We have come to dedicate a
portion of that field, as a final resting
place for those who here gave their lives,
that that nation might live. It is alto-
gether fitting and proper that we should
do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedi-
cate — we can not consecrate — we can not
hallow — this ground. The brave men, liv-
ing and dead, who struggled here, have con-
secrated it, far above our poor power to add
or detract. The world will little note, nor
long remember what we say here, but it can
never forget what they did here. It is for us
the living, rather, to be dedicated here to
the unfinished work which they who fought
here have thus far so nobly advanced.
It is rather for us to be here dedicated to
the great task remaining before us — that
from these honored dead we take increased
devotion to that cause for which they gave
the last full measure of devotion — that
we here highly resolve that these dead shall
not have died in vain — that this nation,
under God, shall have a new birth of free-
dom — and that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall not per-
ish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln.

November 19, 1863.

FACSIMILE OF THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS, WRITTEN BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' FAIR, HELD AT BALTIMORE, IN 1864.

address that has since become the model of forensic eloquence throughout the English speaking world. He said:

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can

never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Many pages could be written concerning the effect of Lincoln's address on the audience. There is a score of reputable witnesses who give conflicting accounts of what they saw and heard. Some aver that the President's words were received in "hushed silence," either because of their impressive solemnity or that they did not

realize that the President had concluded his remarks. Others are equally clear in their recollection that his utterances were loudly applauded. Benjamin French, whose hymn was sung and who heard the address, three days after the event wrote in his diary, "Anyone who saw and heard the hurricane of applause that met his every word at Gettysburg, would know that he lived in every heart. . . ." Newspaper accounts published on the following day interpolated periodic applause.

"As a matter of fact," comments Lamon, in his *Recollections,* "the silence during the delivery of the speech, and the lack of hearty demonstrations of approval immediately after its close, were taken by Mr. Lincoln as certain proof that it was not well received. In that opinion we all shared. . . . Mr. Lincoln said to me after our return to

Washington, 'I tell you, Hill, that speech fell on the audience like a wet blanket. I am distressed about it. I ought to have prepared it with more care." Elsewhere, Lamon says, "He said to me on the stand, immediately after concluding the speech, 'Lamon, that speech won't *scour!* It is a flat failure, and the people are disappointed.' (The word 'scour' he often used in expressing his positive conviction that a thing lacked merit, or would not stand the test of close criticism or the wear of time.)"

In his diary of the memorable events of that day, John Hay made this illuminating entry: "In the morning, I got a beast and rode out with the P— and suite to the Cemetery in procession; . . . and after a little delay Mr. E— took his place on the stand,—and Mr. Stockton made a prayer which

thought it was an oration,—and Mr. E— spoke as he always does, perfectly; and the President, in a firm, free way, with more grace than is his wont, said his half dozen lines of consecration,— and the music wailed, and we went home through crowded and cheering streets."

How different from this passing reference to one of the most momentous events in history, is the more mature judgment of Nicolay and Hay, in their monumental history of Lincoln and his time, recorded nearly thirty years later: "If there arose," they write, "in the mind of any discriminating listener on the platform a passing doubt whether Mr. Lincoln would or could properly honor the unique occasion, that doubt vanished with the opening sentence; for then and there the President pronounced an address of dedica-

tion so pertinent, so brief yet so comprehensive, so terse yet so eloquent, linking the deeds of the present to the thoughts of the future, with simple words in such living, original, yet exquisitely moulded, maxim like phrases that the critics have awarded it an unquestionable rank as one of the world's masterpieces in rhetorical art."

Notwithstanding its surpassing merit in so ably epitomizing the cause of the war and the effect that that war would have on future governments throughout the world, and as a literary masterpiece, save the casual notice it received immediately after its delivery, no history of the Gettysburg Address, the circumstances of its preparation and delivery, was written for over thirty years, until John G. Nicolay, one of Lincoln's secretaries, published his ac-

count in the Century Magazine, in 1894.

"There is every probability," Mr. Nicolay says, " . . . that the assemblage took it for granted that Mr. Lincoln was there as a mere official figurehead, the culminating decoration, so to speak, of the elaborately planned pageant of the day. They were therefore totally unprepared for what they heard, and could not immediately realize that *his* words, and not those of the carefully selected orator, were to carry the concentrated thought of the occasion like a trumpet-peal to farthest posterity."

Among the few who instantly recognized the far reaching effect of the President's address was Wayne MacVeagh, who later distinguished himself as a lawyer, Cabinet member, diplomat and orator. He had gone to

Gettysburg as the President's guest and was seated near him on the platform as he spoke. "I waited until the distinguished guests who wished to do so had spoken to him, and then I said to him with great earnestness, 'You have made an immortal address.' To which he quickly replied: 'Oh, you must not be extravagant about it.'" It was not until the return trip to Washington that night, that MacVeagh again talked with Lincoln. "He had sent for me," he continues, "as I knew, to renew our talk of the day before, but I could not restrain myself from saying to him: 'You did not like what I said to you this morning about your address, and I have thought it carefully over, and I can only say that the words you spoke will live with the land's language.' He answered: 'You are more extravagant than ever, and you are the

only person who has such a misconception of what I said; but I did not send for you to talk about my address, but about more important matters."

This conversation with MacVeagh, his talk with Lamon and his letter to Edward Everett, quoted hereafter, are the only known recorded instances where Lincoln made any comment upon his Gettysburg Address after its delivery.

If there was one man qualified to pass judgment on Lincoln's address, that man was Edward Everett, the recipient of many honors in the realm of oratory for a quarter of a century and who was now to see his own words heralded with superlative praise by an almost unanimous press and people, while those of the President of the United States were to be relegated, for the time being, to obscurity.

The presidential party returned to Washington on the night of November 19th, and on the following day, Mr. Everett wrote a letter to the President in which he paid him a tribute that must have dispelled any thought of failure he may have entertained up to that moment. "I should be glad," the great orator wrote, "if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes." Following is Mr. Everett's letter:

My dear Sir: Not wishing to intrude upon your privacy when you must be much engaged, I beg leave to thank you very sincerely for your great thoughtfulness for my daughter's accommodation on the platform yesterday, and much kindness to me and mine at Gettysburg. Permit me also to express my great admiration of the thoughts expressed by you with such eloquent simplicity and appropriateness at

the consecration of the cemetery. I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes. My son, who parted from me at Baltimore, and my daughter concur in this statement.

On the same day, Lincoln acknowledged this high tribute and again gives proof that he regarded the part which he himself played in the previous day's drama as unimportant:

Your kind note of today is received. In our respective parts yesterday, you could not have been excused to make a short address, nor I a long one. I am pleased to know that in your judgment the little I did say was not a failure. Of course I knew that Mr. Everett would not fail; and yet, while the whole discourse was eminently satisfactory, and will be of great value, there were passages in it which transcended my expectations. The point made against the theory of the General Government being only an agency whose principals are the

states was new to me, and, as I think, is one of the best arguments for national supremacy. The tribute to our noble women for their angel ministering to the suffering soldiers surpasses in its way, as do the subjects of it, whatever has gone before.

WHEN AND WHERE IT WAS WRITTEN

THE question "When and where did Lincoln write the Gettysburg Address?" has been asked and answered many times and in as many ways. The most prevalent, because it is the most popular, theory is that, on the journey from Washington to Gettysburg, Lincoln wrote his masterpiece on the back of an envelope or on a scrap of paper. This fiction probably first derived from a statement in "The History of Abraham Lincoln and the Overthrow of Slavery," by Isaac N. Arnold, published in 1866. "President Lincoln," that writer says, "while on his way from the Capital to the battle-field, was

notified that he would be expected to make some remarks. Retiring a short time, he prepared the following address. . . ." Other writers took up the legend and it was given such universal currency by the publication of an admirable story,—"The Perfect Tribute," by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, —that it has been generally accepted as true. We are told in that story that "Lincoln glanced across the car. Edward Everett sat there. . . ." The fact is that Everett was already in Gettysburg and had been there for several days. Then follows the dramatic story that Lincoln, observing Seward, asked him for some paper, "to do a little writing." On the brown wrapping paper which Seward had torn from a package of books, we are told, the President proceeded to write his address.

"Mr. Lincoln carried in his pocket,"

Nicolay informs us, "the autograph manuscript of so much of his address as he had written the day before." In the face of this statement and the fact that the first page of the original draft is written on White House stationery, and the statements of those to whom the President said that he had written about half of the address before going to Gettysburg, the legend is palpably absurd.

Probably the limited time he had in which to prepare for the occasion accounts for its extreme brevity, for it consists of only two hundred and seventy-two words. The two weeks preceding the dedication were sufficient to give him time for reflection and occasional notes, for the "few appropriate remarks" that were expected of him. One who was as well qualified to speak as anyone, for years a close friend of

the President and his erstwhile law partner, and who presented him to the audience at Gettysburg, Ward Hill Lamon, says:

"A day or two before the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Mr. Lincoln told me that he would be expected to make a speech on the occasion; that he was extremely busy, and had no time for preparation; and that he greatly feared that he would not be able to acquit himself with credit, much less fill the measure of public expectation. From his hat (the usual receptacle for his private notes and memoranda) he drew a sheet of foolscap, one side of which was closely written with what he informed me was a memorandum of his intended address. This he read to me, first remarking that it was not at all satisfactory to him. It proved to be in sub-

stance, if not in exact words, what was afterwards printed as his famous Gettysburg speech."

On the day before the dedication, Noah Brooks, noted journalist and friend of the President, called at the White House to accompany Lincoln to the photographer. As they were leaving, the President recalled that he had forgotten something and returning, produced a Boston newspaper containing an advance copy of Everett's oration, which was sent to apprise him of the ground the Boston orator intended to cover, so that they would not both speak along the same lines. "He said that there was no danger," Brooks relates, "that he would get upon the same lines of Mr. Everett's oration, for what he intended to say was very short, or, as he emphatically expressed it, 'short, short, short.' In reply to a question as

to the speech having been already written, he said that it was written, 'but not finished.' " To the same purport, in an interview published in 1879, James Speed states that the President told him "the day before he left Washington he found time to write about half of his speech." This evidently refers to the first page of what has been definitely established as the original draft of the address. The second page was written some time between Lincoln's arrival at Gettysburg and the delivery of the Address.

At about nine o'clock in the evening of the 18th, Lincoln sent his servant to Mr. Wills to request some writing paper. Mr. Wills delivered it in person, whereupon the President inquired, "Mr. Wills, what do you expect of me tomorrow?" "A brief address," Mr. Wills responded.

"It was after the breakfast hour on the morning of the 19th," Nicolay writes, "that . . . Mr. Lincoln's private secretary went to the upper room in the house of Mr. Wills which Mr. Lincoln occupied, to report for duty, and remained with the President while he finished writing the Gettysburg address, during the short leisure he could utilize for this purpose before being called to take his place in the procession. . . ." This definitely establishes the fact that the first draft was written partly in Washington and finished in Gettysburg. In writing the second page, Lincoln used a lead pencil.

This draft differs somewhat in wording, though not in substance, from the form in which the address was delivered and from the four succeeding autograph copies that Lincoln wrote during the few months ensuing its delivery.

The most important variation consists in the line which originally read, "This we may, in all propriety do." These words, in what has become known as the standard version, as well as in the delivery, were changed to read, "It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this." In delivery and in the last three manuscripts, the President added the two words "under God," in the clause reading, "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom. . . ." Although spoken by the President, these two words do not appear in the first or second drafts.

We now come to the second draft. A few days after the dedication ceremonies, Mr. Wills wrote to the President, requesting the original manuscript of his "dedicatory remarks."

"To comply with this request," writes Nicolay, "the President reëx-

amined his original draft, and the version which had appeared in the newspapers, and saw that, because of the variations between them, the first seemed incomplete, and the others (evidently referring to the newspaper reports), imperfect. By his direction, therefore, his secretaries made copies of the Associated Press report as it was printed in several prominent newspapers. Comparing these with his original draft, and with his own fresh recollection of the form in which he delivered it, he made a new autograph copy—a careful and deliberate revision—which has become the standard and authentic text."

If such a copy was ever sent to Mr. Wills, he never, according to his own statement, received it. There is reasonable doubt that it was ever sent. There are five known autograph copies

and all are accounted for, both as to their preparation and their final disposition. The original and second drafts were given by the President to his secretary, John Hay, whose children gave them to the Library of Congress in 1916. The majority of writers on the subject maintain that the second draft was written in Gettysburg. Mr. Nicolay's statements regarding the first two drafts and the circumstances of their preparation contradict such an assumption.

The third draft, or what has become known as the Everett copy, was written in response to a letter from Mr. Everett, who wrote to the President on January 30th, 1864:

I shall have the honor of forwarding to you by express, today or on Monday next, a copy of the authorized edition of my Gettysburg address, and of the remarks made

by yourself, and the other matters connected with the ceremonial of the dedication of the Cemetery. It appeared, owing to unavoidable delays, only yesterday.

I have promised to give the manuscript of my address to Mrs. Governor Fish of New York, who is at the head of the Ladies' Committee of the Metropolitan fair. It would add very greatly to its value if I could bind up with it the manuscript of your dedicatory remarks, if you happen to have preserved it.

I would further venture to request, that you would allow me also to bind up in the volume the very obliging letter of the 20th November, 1863, which you did me the favor to write me. I shall part with it with much reluctance, and I shrink a little from the apparent indelicacy of giving some publicity to a letter highly complimentary to myself. But as its insertion would greatly enhance the value of the volume when sold at the fair, I shall, if I have your kind permission, waive all other considerations.

In reply to Mr. Everett's letter, Lincoln wrote on February 4th:

Yours of January 30th was received four days ago; and since then the address mentioned has arrived. Thank you for it. I send herewith the manuscript of my remarks at Gettysburg, which, with my note to you of November 20th, you are at liberty to use for the benefit of our soldiers, as you have requested.

It is interesting to note that, whether from a sense of delicacy or a reluctance to part with it, the letter here referred to and quoted in the foregoing pages, was not included in the volume, but descended to Mr. Everett's heirs, who gave it, in 1930, to the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Accordingly, this, the third autograph copy, was bound in a volume, together with Mr. Everett's oration. The latter consists of 56 finely written pages, in Mr. Everett's hand, while Lincoln's remarks occupy a page and a half. The volume was sold to an uncle

of United States Senator Henry W. Keyes, in whose family it remained until 1929, when it was acquired by a New York collector.

The fourth draft, known as the Bancroft copy, was written for the benefit of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Fair, held in Baltimore in April, 1864, in response to a personal request by George Bancroft, the noted historian. John P. Kennedy, a contemporary novelist and Colonel Alexander J. Bliss, of Baltimore, conceived the idea of issuing a book, to be entitled "Autograph Leaves of our Country's Authors," the work to contain facsimile reproductions of a page or two of many of America's prominent authors. It was for this purpose that President Lincoln was asked to write the fourth copy of his Gettysburg Address. A few days later, Mr. Bancroft made a request for still

another copy, with which the President cheerfully complied. It was explained that the first copy was not suitable for the purpose for which it was intended. Every writer from Nicolay to Dr. Barton who discusses the fourth copy falls into the error of assuming that "it was written on both sides of a letter-sheet," and was not, therefore, in suitable form for lithographing. The fact is that this copy is neatly written on pages one and three of a folded letter-sheet, and is accompanied by a holograph letter of transmittal from Lincoln. The apparent reason for the second request was that all the other manuscripts in Autograph Leaves were to bear a title and signature and the President was asked to write his correspondingly. Hence the fifth and last autograph copy of the Gettysburg Address, which is known as

the Bliss copy. This copy bears the caption, "Address delivered at the dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg," in Lincoln's hand, is dated November 19, 1863, and is signed, "Abraham Lincoln," one of the rare instances in which Lincoln used his full signature on an unofficial document.

The original manuscript volume of Autograph Leaves was to have been sold at the Baltimore Fair for $1,000, but as no one bought it, it remained in the Bliss family and is now the property of Dr. William J. A. Bliss, of Baltimore.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE

THE closing words of the Gettysburg Address, "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth," have been made the subject of much speculative discussion. It has been suggested that Lincoln "borrowed" the phrase from others, who had used similar terms. This phrase has been used in various forms resembling each other, though not in the same words, throughout the ages. Cleon, the Athenian demagogue, is said to have used it in 430 B.C. The next record of its use that is known is

found in a work published in London, in 1794, where Thomas Cooper refers to "a government of the people and for the people." At a public meeting held at Olten, Switzerland, in May, 1830, a speaker named Schinz said, "All the governments of Switzerland (speaking of the cantons) must acknowledge that they are simply from all the people, by all the people, and for all the people." Patrick Henry used similar language in one of his speeches, as did John Marshall in his opinion in the famous case of McCulloch against Maryland. In his fourth annual message, President Monroe referred to "a government which is founded by, administered for and supported by the people." Daniel Webster, in his reply to Hayne, in 1830, said, "It is, Sir, the People's Constitution, the People's Government; made for the People; made by

the People; and answerable to the People."

Lincoln is known to have read and pencil-marked an address delivered by Theodore Parker, the abolitionist, in 1858, in which these words appeared: "Democracy is direct self-government, over all the people, for all the people, by all the people." None of the score of writers and speakers who used the phrase did so in the concise and effective form which Lincoln gave to it in the Gettysburg Address. He used substantially similar words embracing this thought in a special message to Congress, July 4th, 1860, when he said:

"This issue embraces more than the fate of these United States. It presents to the whole family of man the question whether a constitutional republic, or democracy—a government of the people by the same people—can

or cannot maintain its territorial integrity against its own domestic foes. It presents the question whether discontented individuals, . . . can . . . break up their government, and thus practically put an end to free government upon the earth."

POSTSCRIPT

THERE is but one Gettysburg Address. In forensic art, it remains without a peer. Horace Greely, for years one of Lincoln's bitterest antagonists, said of it that "that little speech delivered at Gettysburg is the finest gem in American literature." And where can we find a more just appraisal than that of Robert Ingersoll? He said, "If you wish to know the difference between an orator and an elocutionist—between what is felt and what is said—between what the heart and brain can do together and what the brain can do alone—read

Lincoln's wondrous speech at Gettysburg, and then the oration of Edward Everett. The speech of Lincoln will never be forgotten. It will live until languages are dead and lips are dust."

Within its brief compass, Lincoln summed up the fundamental principles of the American government, namely, that of political equality. He pointed out that the Civil War was being fought to test whether a nation conceived upon that principle could endure and at the same time paid a tribute to the dead and living who fought in defense of that principle that surpasses in eloquence anything uttered by the foremost orators of the world.

When, fifty years after Gettysburg, the world was plunged into war, not one of all the learned statesmen who controlled the destinies of their nations delivered himself of a single sentence

that is remembered today, with the possible exception of Woodrow Wilson, who said that it was "a war to make the world safe for democracy." This was but another way of saying that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

(*Continued from front flap*)

"The True Story of the Gettysburg Address" is a little volume which every lover of Lincoln will want to possess, for it is entirely unique. The author has set down his conclusions definitely and clearly, making it more than a work of scholarship, for its scholarship does not prevent it from being a brilliantly written narrative of what happened on that historic afternoon and on the days leading up to and following it.

This book is peculiarly fitted for use in schools, of all grades, where, it is hoped, it will serve, as an authentic record, and an inspiration to millions of young Americans, the citizens of tomorrow.

LINCOLN MAC VEAGH

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